



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Your Turn: Experiments in Narrative and Play

Citation for published version:

Allmer, P, Carson, J & Miller, R 2008, 'Your Turn: Experiments in Narrative and Play', *The Blue Notebook*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 25-35. <<http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/bnotebk.htm>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

The Blue Notebook

General rights

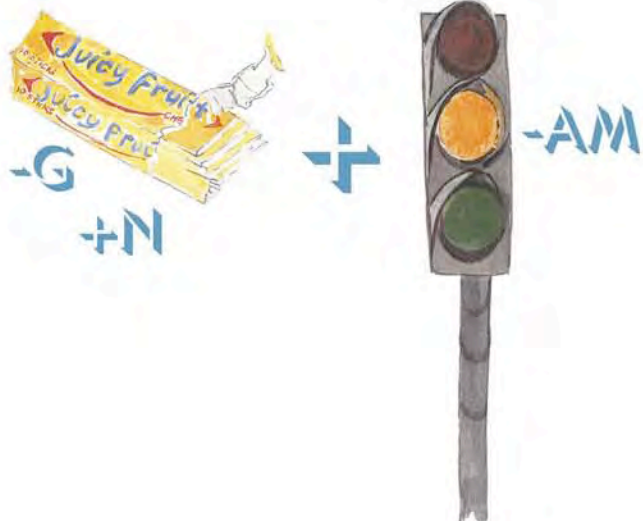
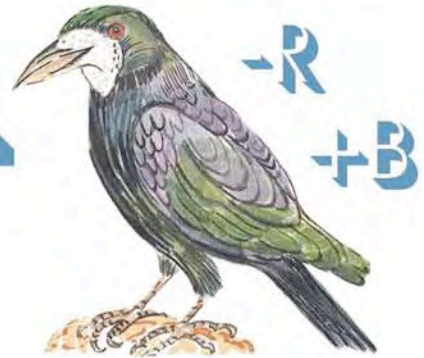
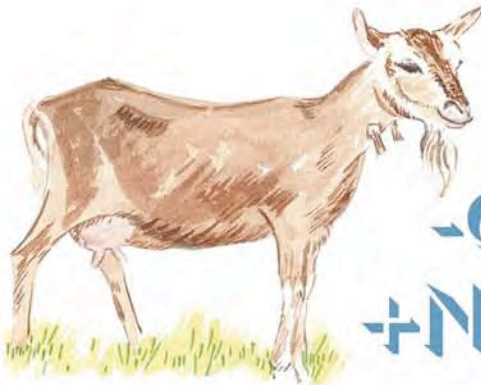
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



THE



The Blue Notebook
Volume 3 No. 1
October 2008

The Blue Notebook is published in two formats: an online colour version, and a paper, black and white version. An annual subscription covers both formats for two issues, UK or international. For subscriptions, please download the form on our publications page: www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/bnotebk.htm or contact us for a postal form.

We welcome submissions of writing on contemporary artists' books and related issues for *The Blue Notebook*. Please email Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk for guidelines, or see: www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/bnotebk.htm

Artists' contributions are by invitation from the Art Editor, Tom Sowden.

The Blue Notebook journal for artists' books is published by Impact Press at the Centre for Fine Print Research UWE Bristol, School of Creative Arts Kennel Lodge Road, Bristol, BS3 2JT, UK

Tel: +44 (0)117 328 4915
Fax: +44 (0)117 328 5865

Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk
Tom.Sowden@uwe.ac.uk
www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk

The Blue Notebook Vol.3 No.1 October 2008
ISSN 1751-1712 (print)
ISSN 1751-1720 (online)



© 2008 publication, Impact Press
© 2008 texts, individual authors
© 2008 images, individual artists

Permission to photocopy texts for personal use, one-off educational use in study packs, or for individual academic study is granted. For any other use, please contact the editor and the individual author or artist for their authorisation.

Editor: Sarah Bodman
Art Editor: Tom Sowden
Design: Sarah Bodman and Tom Sowden
Cover Design: Beth White, with illustrations by Penny White

The views expressed within *The Blue Notebook* are not necessarily those of the editors or publisher.

Contents:

<i>Artist's page</i> Nick Thurston	4	<i>Artist's page</i> Baysan Yüksel	72
<i>Introduction</i> Sarah Bodman	5	Artist's Page Contributors' Biographies	73
<i>Under covers: South Africa's apartheid army - an incubator for artists' books</i> Robyn Sassen	7	Referees' Biographies	75
<i>Artist's page</i> E F Stevens	17	<i>Artist's page</i> Sandy Christie	76
<i>Artist's page</i> David Faithfull	18		
<i>Photography and the Sequence: The Image as Poetry, Page by Page</i> Dr Anne Hammond	19		
<i>Your Turn: experiments in narrative and play</i> Co-written by Player 1 (Patricia Allmer), Player 2 (John Sears), Player 3 (Rosie Miller) and Player 4 (Jonathan Carson)	25		
<i>Artists' pages</i> Carson & Miller	36 & 37		
<i>Laser Cutting with Character</i> Danny Flynn	39		
<i>James Castle, Revisited</i> Tom Trusky	47		
<i>Between Design and Art: Differences and problems in Japan</i> Kyoko Tachibana	51		
<i>Artist's page</i> seekers of lice	60		
<i>How to Gut A Fish</i> by Brandon Graham Reviewed by Brad Freeman	61		
<i>Enfolded by Holes: a Diagram of Openings</i> Tate Shaw	63		

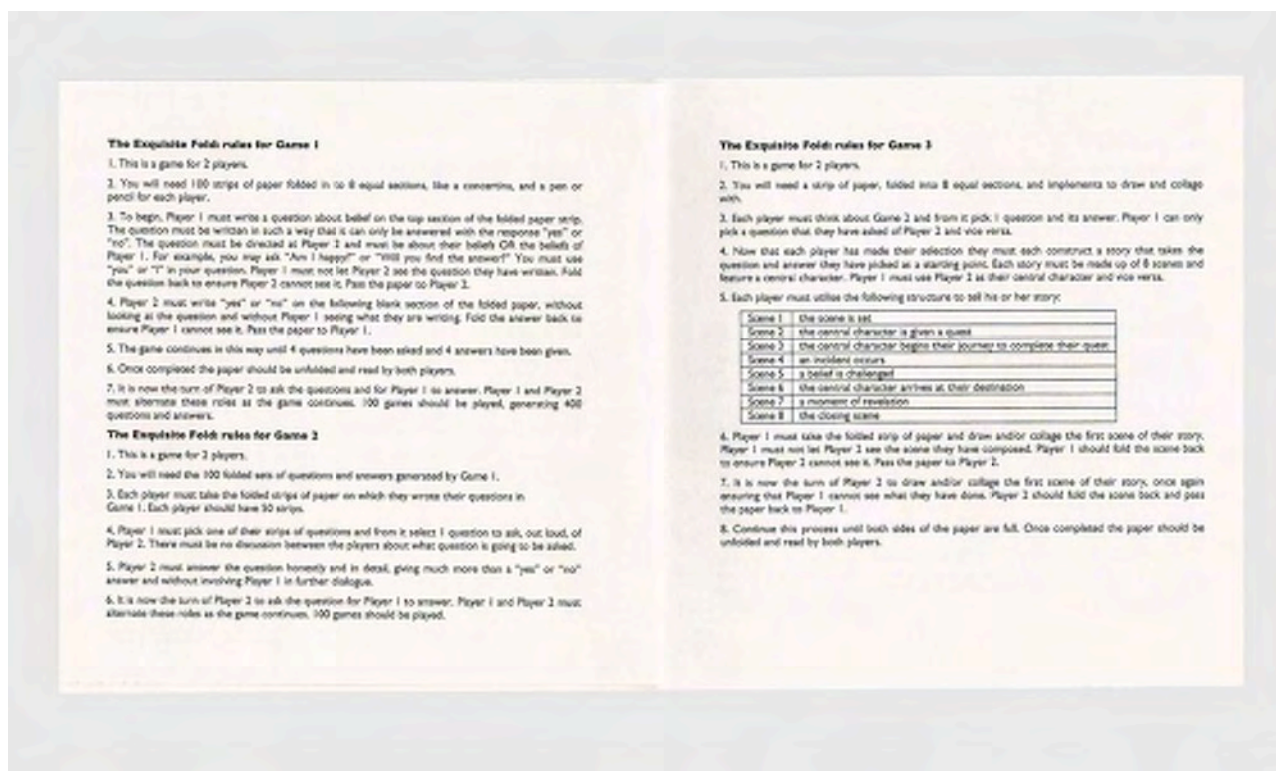


Figure 1: *The Exquisite Fold: rules for Game 1, Game 2 and Game 3*, Carson & Miller, 2007
30 x 15 cm, inkjet printed on 125gsm cartridge paper, published in an edition of 100

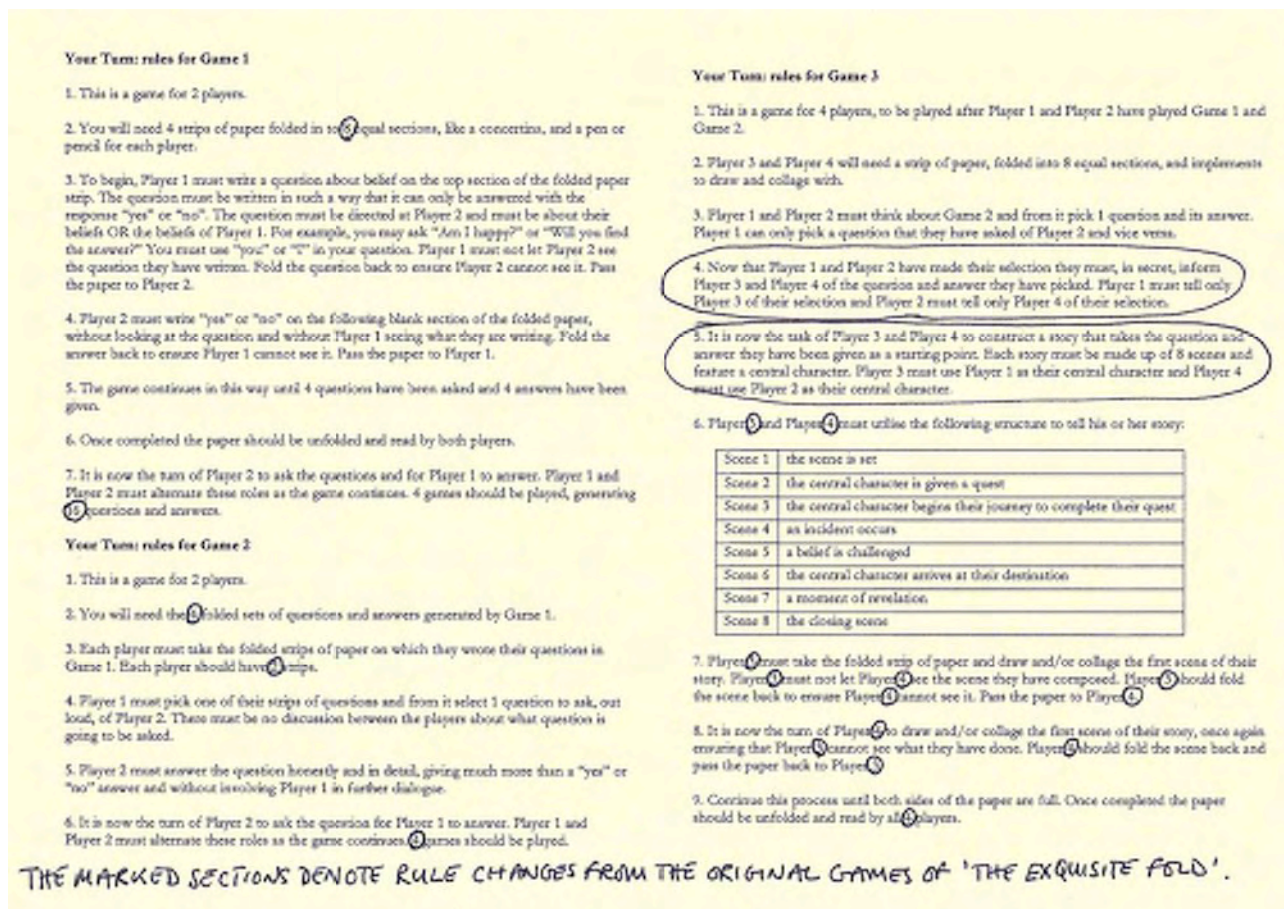


Figure 2: *Your Turn: rules for Game 1, Game 2 and Game 3*, Carson & Miller, 2008
29.7 x 21 cm, inkjet printed with hand-written notes in ink, preparatory material for artist's page project

Your Turn: experiments in narrative and play

Co-written by Player 1 (Patricia Allmer), Player 2 (John Sears), Player 3, (Rosie Miller) and Player 4 (Jonathan Carson)

Introduction

In summer 2007 Jonathan Carson and Rosie Miller in collaboration with Patricia Allmer and John Sears began a project that resulted in the artist's book *The Exquisite Fold*. Carson and Miller were interested in creating an artist's book where a starting point was imposed upon them. At their request, Allmer and Sears set the initial parameters of Carson and Miller's explorations, thus establishing two key principles that drive the resulting book; the surrealist game of exquisite corpse¹ and the notion of the fold. Carson and Miller's initial task was to read the M. R. James short story *Canon Alberic's Scrap-book* (1895). This ghost story was chosen by Allmer and Sears, following discussions between all four collaborators around the idea of the fold and its implications to both physical structure and intellectual discourse. Allmer and Sears selected this reading because within it they had identified textual representations of the exquisite corpse, as outlined in their (unpublished) note to Carson and Miller:

...these include the creature, the scrapbook and its potential subtexts, and the narrative itself with its manifold languages and citations, the uncanniness of the scene and setting.

Following several readings, Carson and Miller focussed on one particular footnote that translated a text (in Latin) that Dennistoun, (the story's central protagonist) discovers in the scrap-book of the title. Translated, the text reads as follows:

Answers of the 12th of December 1694. It was asked: Shall I find it? Answer: Thou shalt. Shall I become rich? Thou wilt. Shall I live an object of envy? Thou wilt. Shall I die in my bed? Thou wilt. (James, 1895, in Cox, 1987, 7)

Carson and Miller were intrigued by a number of aspects of this footnote; the rhythm of the dialogue, the strangeness of the set of questions, the decisiveness of the responses and the micro-narratives (within a broader narrative) that are evoked within this fragment. Taking the pattern of question and answer evident in the extract, the artists developed the principles of a game to play between them. After this first game

(*Game 1*) had been played *Game 2* was developed from it, and then, in turn, *Game 3* emerged from *Game 2*. The structure and playing of each game thus affected the structure and playing of the subsequent game. These games became the central content for *The Exquisite Fold* along with Allmer and Sears' text *Dare You Play On?*²; an analysis of the fold, its intrinsic behaviour of concealment and revelation, and its relationship to the game of exquisite corpse.

Presented here are three explorations of *The Exquisite Fold* itself along with some of the ideas that have emerged from the book since its production. What follows are three new texts, one by Carson and Miller, another by Allmer and Sears, and a third artist's page project which is derived from the playing of the three games documented in *The Exquisite Fold* (utilising a variation of the rules set out in the book in order for the games to be played by four players - Allmer, Carson, Miller and Sears, see Figure 1 and Figure 2). This altered set of games and the new work presented here as artists' pages share the title of this article: *Your Turn*.

In *Part One*, Carson and Miller develop a reflexive dialogue about the making of *The Exquisite Fold*. Alternating type signifies the turns they take in a discourse that reflects the notions that drive the book - play, exchange and narrative. In *Part Two*, Allmer and Sears explore the newly developed game of *Your Turn*, reflecting on their experience of becoming players and re-visiting the fold and its secrets.

In the artists' pages, *Your Turn (John)* and *Your Turn (Patricia)* (see artists' pages, 36 & 37), the results of Allmer, Carson, Miller and Sears' game is displayed in the form of documentation, showing the paraphernalia of the collaborators' play. Illustrating these texts are the rules of the games, both to inform the reader's understanding and to invite them to become a player too (see Figure 1 & Figure 2).

Part One

Perhaps the best way to begin is to explain how we decided who should start this essay. Of course, the answer to this is that we played a game. This seemed both appropriate and inevitable when placed in context with the creation of *The Exquisite Fold*; a book which concentrates on the principle of play and, through this, the discovery of meaning and

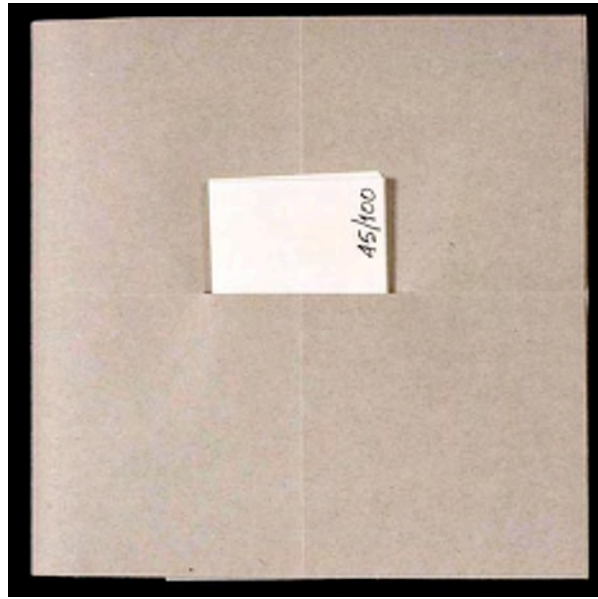


Figure 3: *The Exquisite Fold* (view of front cover), Carson & Miller, 2007, 17 x 17 cm, one original of the 100 games played in Game 1 inserted into a hand-folded paper cover, published in an edition of 100, photograph: Tony Richards



Figure 4: *The Exquisite Fold* (view of interior, extended), Carson & Miller, 2007
120 x 17 cm, inkjet printed on 125gsm cartridge paper, bound with a paper strap and held in a hand-folded paper cover (audio CD not seen), published in an edition of 100, photograph: Tony Richards

apparent truth. Intersecting these aspects of the work is the materiality of the book itself. At first glance the book is a representation of our game-playing. It lays out (quite literally - see Figure 3 & Figure 4) for the reader; it is a document of our games and at the same time is instructive, inviting the reader to find a partner and play themselves. Beyond these principles though, this book is inherently a playful object. It invites the reader to engage with its structure, to unfold, take apart, re-assemble and re-present at will.

Of course, the person who won the game to write the above opening paragraph might assume they had won the right to set the agenda for this essay. As with the game-playing in our book the reader should expect a certain amount of manoeuvring to go on. Despite the clear contradiction (like many in *The Exquisite Fold*) I want to make it clear from the out set that I don't like playing games or game playing. However, the link between creating a game and creating a story is intriguing. Children make this link unconsciously, but it's less obvious in an adult context. Narrative is a crucial way for adults and children alike to try and gain some understanding of ourselves and our world. This was the driving force behind the narrative games we created and played throughout the book. Our attempts to both tell and find truths via the deceptively simple game of question and answer reveal conflicting, uncomfortable and sometimes unintentionally humorous narratives. Instead of finding a greater understanding the overall experience of the book is one of uncertainty; how to hold it, where to begin reading it, how to judge the tone and what conclusions to draw from the narrative it conveys. In his discussions on the uncanny Nicholas Royle examines the relationship between the uncanny and uncertainty in relation to our understanding of ourselves:

The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly one's sense of one's self...seems strangely questionable.
(Royle, 2003, 1)

When applied to our collaborative practice, uncertainty as a mode of thinking is surprisingly productive. The premise of our game-playing is founded in discovery through adherence to an uncertain set of rules². Essentially these rules are nonsense - our first game in particular is founded on whimsy and caprice. But, conversely, the results of these games (restricted and therefore defined by

these rules) can strike right to the heart of a very personal truth in an accurate way, or at least begin to worry the corners of a perceived reality. My approach to games is usually one of indifference with the exception of games like the one we have created, that purport to reveal something about the players (I am a fan of the magazine questionnaire for instance, that insists that I am mostly an A, a B or a C). I engage with the search for simplistic character definition but am ready to take umbrage if I don't agree, to condemn a scrappily defined personality that does not depict the complexity of me. *The Exquisite Fold* centralises the creative impulse I suspect we both have to seek out narrative that does not conform to prescribed structures, a type of narrative in fragment form that the reader can see evidenced in the strings of questions in *Game 1* (see Figure 5 & Figure 6) and the well intended truths - that are in fact half-truths - that emerge in *Game 2* (see Figure 7 & Figure 8). Running concurrent to this is our desire to tell an archetypal story; to harness that which doesn't conform and to make it fit a pattern or structure that is underpinned by a universal understanding. This is visible in the picture-book tale telling of *Game 3* (see Figure 9 & Figure 10), a comic strip reduction of what has been a complex response to a potentially loaded question.

And then, this all takes me back to the book itself, as a container for these scraps and traces of stories that are partially told/partially untold; the book '...transformed into a magical object...a storehouse of obscure passions and unarticulated desires' (Auster, 1992, 66).

The idea of the book as a magical object is of course a rather a romantic notion and is suggestive of traditional formats in both its physical and conceptual structure. There may be some readers of our book who find the magic is lost because the book looks and reads in a fractured way. In addition it could be argued that creating narratives from game playing has a certain casualness and randomness about it that might inhibit the reader from making an emotional connection, an important element in the act of reading. This connection with the reader is put under more strain because the narrative games are attempting to deal with truth and belief, not areas generally associated with game playing. Of course, we felt very committed to these narrative games when we played them; after all we created the games and the games are about us! But how does the reader find a connection,

12	Do you have integrity?~No~Are you a cheat?~Yes~Have you just cheated?~Yes~Will I win?~No
13	Are you trying to find a truth?~Yes~Would you help me try and find a truth?~No~Do you think others are trying to find a truth?~Yes~Do you think it would help if there was a truth?~Yes
14	Should I pursue fame and fortune?~Yes~Will you do the same?~Yes~Do you think that money matters?~Yes~Can you imagine a world without greed?~Yes
15	Are you fearful in life?~No~Are you fearful of death?~No~Can you see fear in others?~No~Would you help me in my fear?~No
16	Are you a product of your childhood?~Yes~Can you recall feeling powerless?~Yes~Have I grown up enough?~No~Are you finished?~Yes
17	Do you think happiness is attainable?~Yes~Do you try to make other people happy?~Yes~Would you risk all for happiness?~No~Am I included in your happiness?~Yes
18	Are you an advocate of violence?~No~Will you hurt me?~Yes~Should I be afraid?~No~Am I safe?~No
19	Dare you let go of your plans?~No~Would you be scared of living a life of total freedom?~Yes~Do you want to make plans with someone?~Yes~Are you lost?~Yes
20	Can you imagine a wilderness?~No~Do you belong there?~Yes~Will you find your way?~Yes~Shall I follow?~No
21	Can you be brutal?~Yes~Do you think the world is brutal?~Yes~Do you think I am brutal?~Yes~Are you scared of me?~Yes
22	Do you think that God is dead?~No~Will you hide when the apocalypse comes?~No~Are you without sin?~Yes~Can you bear to look at yourself?~Yes
23	Do you want there to be another world?~Yes~Do you think there is another world?~No~Do you care about what others

Figure 5: *The Exquisite Fold* (detail 1 of Game 1), Carson & Miller, 2007
15 x 5 cm, inkjet printed on 125gsm cartridge paper, published in an edition of 100

24	Are you strong up and be counted?~No~Do you think bravery is important?~No~Are you trying to find someone?~No~Do I need someone?~No
25	Are you enslaved to technology?~Yes~Can you lose yourself in reverie?~Yes~Do you see a brighter future?~Yes~Shall you sleep soundly tonight?~Yes
26	Do you have regrets?~No~Do you think our past influences our future?~Yes~Do you hide your fear?~No~Would you like to know how it ends?~Yes
27	Do you delay pleasure?~Yes~Should I be harsher in my manner?~No~Were you once kinder?~Yes~Will I change as I get older?~Yes
28	Do you believe in marriage?~No~Do you want to get married?~Yes~Could you stop yourself from falling in love?~No~Do you look for love?~Yes
29	Have you ever wished for the impossible?~No~Should I want a better life?~Yes~Are you complete?~Yes~Dare you continue?~No
30	Do you believe in evolution?~Yes~Do you believe in yourself?~Yes~Dare you tell others your truth?~No~Do you fear weakness?~Yes
31	Did you know that God has forsaken us?~Yes~Can you accept that nature is in charge?~Yes~Are you numb from indifference?~Yes~Do I have the solution?~No
32	Do you think there is a reason for us to be here?~Yes~Do you think love is always the answer?~Yes~Will you ever just want to walk away?~Yes~Do you think we should always be true to ourselves?~Yes
33	Are you free?~No~Am I?~No~Will you rise to the challenge when the world turns to you?~Yes~Do you know why you were chosen?~No
34	Do you like women?~No~Are you frightened of men?~No~Could you totally trust yourself to someone?~Yes~Do you want to change?~Yes

Figure 6: *The Exquisite Fold* (detail 2 of Game 1), Carson & Miller, 2007
15 x 5 cm, inkjet printed on 125gsm cartridge paper, published in an edition of 100

is it only through playing these games themselves and discovering their own narratives? Does the fact that there are so many contradictions in the narratives create another barrier to the reader? *Game 2* is especially problematic, particularly for us. I think it's fair to say that we both have real difficulty listening to the narratives in this section of the book³ (see Figure 7 & Figure 8). When we recorded the playing of *Game 2* we were very clear with one another that the answers we gave were to be truthful. However, when we listen back we can hear our unconscious attempts to project certain narratives of ourselves for the purpose of self-protection, what is the reader to make of this? If a read is to be successful a reader needs to commit to the book but the book also needs to commit to the reader. Is that possible when the narratives are created from play?

I wonder if your response is to the scrappiness of the book. It is constructed with fragmentary narratives (indeed a reader might struggle with the term narrative when applied to what they see presented in *The Exquisite Fold*), and these fragments could be troubling to a reader searching for a linear thread. If, though, the reader accepts the non-linear, multiple and multi-faceted aspects of the book and sees (instead of a single narrative structure) the potential for narrative, the need to commit to the book changes. Perhaps the commitment that *The Exquisite Fold* demands is to the impulsiveness of play rather than to the book itself - this book demands a playful reader. And, in addition to this, it seeks a reader who is engaged with language and meaning. The language of the questions is careful; almost accidentally a quiet poetry is developed through them, a rhythm of call-and-response (that Allmer and Sears explore so well in their essay within the book), a rhythm which engages the reader with their own soothing/taunting internal voice which asks "will I, am I, will you, are you?" Our disembodied voices - unrehearsed, stuttering and unsure - responding to the long list of questions we had composed in whimsy, are an antidote to the rhythm of *Game 1* but become the essence of *Game 3*, a satisfying inversion that results in a fictionalised truth.

So, by our own description, we present to the reader *The Exquisite Fold*; a book with a scrappy and fractured narrative that has been created in a rather random fashion via the playing of our own made-up games. Despite all these things I think you would agree that we want the reader to find their own connection with

the book, both in terms of its content and physical structure. It invites anyone connecting with it not necessarily *just* to be a reader, but also to be a fellow player of the games and, thus, creator of their own narratives. Of course, the book could be seen simply as a set of rules with a series of examples to illustrate them. However, we hope some readers will cross over to be participants in our game playing.

Part Two

The series of games that constituted *The Exquisite Fold* comprised also a complete text, an artist's book as a record of a game played between Carson and Miller, on the one hand, and Allmer and Sears on the other. This object, resulting from the activity of playing the game, comprised both the playing of the game and its extrapolation into a theoretical essay, an attempt to describe, account for and consider the inter-relations between text and game, rules and players, game and product. Alluding in its title to surrealism's game of exquisite corpse, and reliant on an initial reading of M. R. James' story *Canon Alberic's Scrapbook*, the game also invokes the social field of play (a game for four players - see Figure 2), with the resulting interactions between players that extend also, in this prospective exploration of play, to the conception and establishment of rules for the game. *The Exquisite Fold* was thus an examination not only of play but also of the conditions of play and of the interactions, negotiations and agreements necessary for the establishment and concordance of those agreements as rules. These rules, applied and adhered to in the first playing, have been adapted and abbreviated in the second (*Your Turn*), in order to constitute a process and a consequent object that is wholly new; not a mirror image or a reversal of the first game, but instead a form of adaptation that offers itself as a transformative response (see artists' pages *Your Turn (John)* and *Your Turn (Patricia)*, pp 36 & 37).

The nature of this response is the concern of this essay. Gaming is structured around a flow which oscillates between different poles; movements of energy and activity enable the dynamism of the specific game, its vibrant life, the essential process of production which play both celebrates and nullifies. Play is, after all, specifically non-productive in measurable terms, a 'waste' of time and energy, an expense of spirit, at the same time as it produces the symptom of that profligacy, the excitement of pleasure. *The Exquisite Fold* is a creative enterprise structured in the back-and-forth

Player 2: Can you recall feeling powerless?

Player 1: I can very vividly, as a child particularly – erm – I suppose – er, silly things like, you know, having to wear hand me down clothes. Actually they weren't very silly at the time was a major issue as a teenager having to wear – erm – middle-aged ladies coats and dresses and things, awful. But that...that did make me feel powerless. But I think most in particular when my mum died, when I was quite young, and I do remember lying in the dark and thinking, you know, what happens now? What happens now? Erm, I...I did feel powerless and I think part of my drive in life is, er, not to lose control like that again of, of my life, I don't mean of myself, of my life.

Figure 7: *The Exquisite Fold* (transcribed excerpt from recording of Game 2), Carson & Miller, 2007 audio CD, published in an edition of 100

Player 1: Could you stop yourself from falling in love?

Player 2: I think I probably could, although I've never had to. Erm, as soon as you ask that question I want to think about the other side of it which is, erm, could I make myself fall in love? Erm, and again (half laughs) I'm not sure I could do that either, but it would be great if I could. Erm, but I ...I think can, I think I could stop myself from falling in love because, I think again, it's a sort of bit of a self protective device and it's probably one that, erm, if you were speaking right now, you'd be saying, 'Well actually Jonathan, you should probably just let that happen, er and take the risk.' But I'm afraid I...I probably could is...is the answer.

Figure 8: *The Exquisite Fold* (transcribed excerpt from recording of Game 2), Carson & Miller, 2007 audio CD, published in an edition of 100

flow of the game; *Your Turn* returns to the game, reworks it (introducing, in turn, the notion of work in reworking, of labour in the devising of responses to reconfigurations of the rules). In this sense, the structure of call and response that organised the initial game is doubled or echoed in *Your Turn*. The rules given out return, in different form, to the senders; they, in turn, become receivers of new instructions, producing their own game-products which are sent back (another return, the doubling redoubled) to the new rule-setters to be reworked and transformed yet again in (to use another geometry) a spiral of productivity and reproductivity. Re-turning in this game is crucial marking not just the turning of the paper, the 'to and fro' between question and answer as well as the return of all four players to this game, but also the act of not holding on to, not insisting on ownership.

The logic recounted here is that of the reply - an exquisitely awaited reply, not unlike the awaiting of a love letter (in which form will it arrive? what will it contain? which reply will it invite?). A letter is sent (in the case of *Your Turn* the 'to and fro' of opened and veiled messages spans across a spectrum of letters, postcards [featuring darkly erotic 'exquisite corpses' in the form of the objectified displays of Frida Kahlo's tortured body and Pierre Klossowski's Sadean drawing of his wife Denise], meetings, text messages and emails - from speech to voice recording and from the written word to the image (see artists' pages *Your Turn* (John) and *Your Turn* (Patricia), pp36 & 37); it inaugurates productivity in the form of a reply - 'to answer or respond in words or writing', the OED tells us. Replying, in this sense, is deeply structured into the game from the very beginning: *The Exquisite Fold* asks questions which demand answers or responses, and it is in the dialectic of question and response as well as that of instruction and response that the game's specific distortions of grammar occur. To reply is also, among other things, to refold, to fold anew in the same or different forms. The word 'reply' derives from Old French *replier*, to turn back; it combines the prefix *re-* with *ply*, which (in a form listed in the OED as 'now rare or dialect' but present in descriptions of tissue paper as 'two-ply') can mean 'to bend, bow, to fold or double'. It can also mean 'to apply, employ, work busily at'; the word 'ply' thus contains meanings of creative folding and application, of distortion (bending) and labour ('working busily'). It encapsulates within a three-letter word the ambivalences of play as productive non-production, as an activity bound by the contradictions of a work-ethic.

A reply may thus be grasped as a response that folds back, that bends or distorts, and that returns the labour of the original demand, the work-as-play inculcated by the original questions and textual requirements (to read, to interpret, to create, to rework and rewrite) of *The Exquisite Fold*. *Your Turn* involves precisely such a reply, and combines it (not inappropriately) with the act of replaying. Replying and replaying, replaying as replying, describes the process involved in the production of *Your Turn*. One common modern meaning of 'replaying' implies a rerun, the playing back of a recording, a repetition that is implicit also in the etymology of 'ply' (from Latin *plicare*, fold, giving also 'replication'). Replying and replaying thus enfold each other, sharing an etymological root that gestures towards (mechanical) reproduction, the process of representation and recording manifest, in the games of *Exquisite Fold*, in the (re-) production of the book *The Exquisite Fold*.

But replaying is never simply mechanical in its reproduction of the game. As with all successful games, the rules construct a field of play upon which a potentially infinite number of different games may be played - a potentially infinite number of foldings and refoldings. Developing out of the initial process of interpretation and rule-establishment, *The Exquisite Fold* and its reply/replay/replication *Your Turn* constitute a unique example of a potentially infinite set; its documentation in texts and essays allows for potentially infinite future reconstructions that will demonstrate not the simplicity of replication, but the complexity of replying and replaying, as the modes in which these games operate.

The secret constitutes a fundamental element of these games. The secret here is concealed within the questions we never dare to ask, questions which seem to reveal more about the one who asks rather than the one who answers ("do you love me?"), and the answers we never dare to give ("no"). In this sense the game turns, rotating around secrets, around the revelation of truths like a wheel turning about its axis. The performance of a confessional without confessing is an integral, revelatory part of this game. The secretive gesture of turning and folding the paper invites and initiates further secret questions and answers which may be safely deposited in the folds of the paper, uttered in the safety of the blind-fold (signifier of disinterest, objectivity, dispassion) assigned to co-incidence. This in turn allows truth to open up within the game, perhaps revealing the game of the exquisite corpse as *aletheia*, the Heideggerian conception of the intricacies of unconcealment which rests in concealment, and which Lacan described as

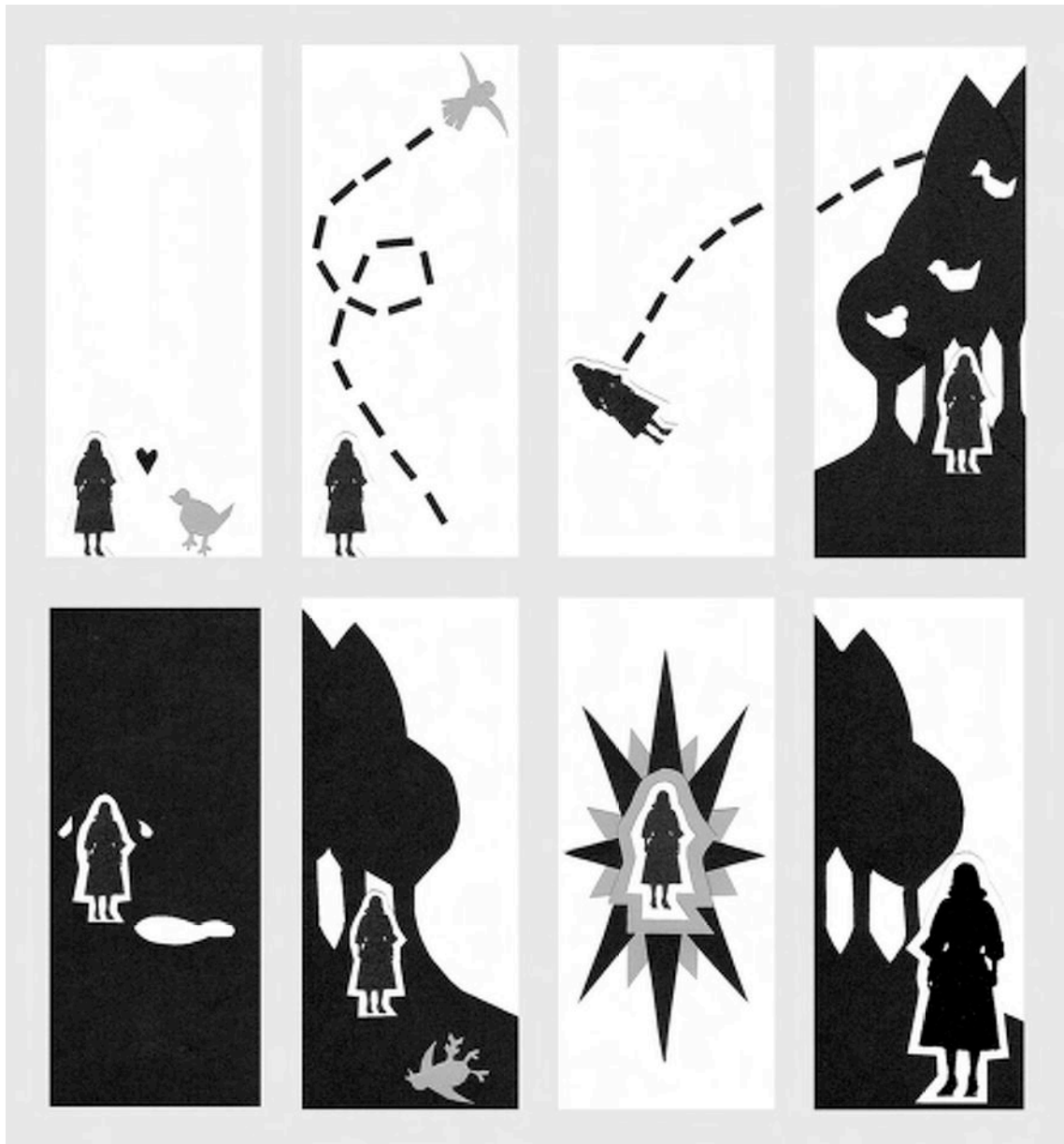


Figure 9: *The Exquisite Fold* (full version of Game 3: Can you recall feeling powerless?), Carson & Miller, 2007 27 x 29 cm, hand-collaged work on paper. N.B.: This illustration is composed for the purposes of this article, the images are displayed differently in *The Exquisite Fold*.

[...] the play of truth, [where] we rediscover a secret to which truth has always initiated her lovers, and through which they learn that it is in hiding that she offers herself to them most truly. (Lacan, 1956, in Muller and Richardson, 1988, 37)

Truth flickers inconstantly, elusive and intangible, momentarily revealed and reconcealed in the asking of questions and their answering, in the playing and replaying of the game and the folding and refolding of the logics of play and production. Truth is in-between (in this game, literally and metaphorically), it is (dis-)located in flux. The turning here is also an act of circulation, of passing on, short-circuiting the emphasis (*Your Turn* ...) on ownership and property emerging out of the dynamics of appropriation and re-appropriation, mobilising a dialogue where interpretation and translation are crucial: the prefixes *inter-* and *trans-* suggest again locationality as integral to the dynamics of play, emphasising the movement between spaces, the 'to and fro' between the different players involved in this game, which becomes, within and out of this movement, a creative act of co-operation. The narrative here is eternally incomplete, in the course of becoming - perhaps this is its very secret, that '[...] being must engage other being in order to achieve self-definition' (Steiner, 1975, 301) - the definition of the self through the other.

In this sense *Your Turn* can be understood as an exercise in communication and, more specifically, in the joy of communication. It demonstrates human striving to make meanings via narratives, which are in turn translations and interpretations in their widest sense. Michael Holquist argues that life consists of the act of responding, and expression means, within this conception, the making of meaning:

When I cease to respond, when there are - as we say so accurately in English - *no signs of life*, I am dead. [...] Expression means to make meaning, and meaning comes about only through the medium of signs. This is true at all levels of existence: something *exists* only if it *means*. (Holquist, 1981, 49)

Your Turn, the game, can be understood as a language game signifying, in its very constitution and performance, response; it signifies being evolving out of communication and interaction, the becoming of the game an allegory of the coming-into-being of existence. The self in this structure becomes an event, imbricated in a game, in the course of an exchange in which the Cartesian *cogito*, the reason for existence, is based on a dialogic exchange. The French poet

Francis Ponge offers a redefinition of the *cogito* that reverberates throughout the playing of *The Exquisite Fold* and *Your Turn*, their doublings and redoublings, petitions and repetitions, their weaving of the narratives of subjective and social being: 'I speak and you hear me, therefore we are.' (Kristeva, 1981, 74)

Jonathan Carson and Rosie Miller have published a number of artists' books, most recently *Things We Have Seen* (2007) and *synopsis* (2008). They are currently working on an artist's book and exhibition in collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University's Special Collections, Righton Press and English Research Institute for completion in 2009.

Jonathan Carson lectures at the School of Art & Design, University of Salford.

Rosie Miller lectures at Manchester of School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University and the School of Art & Design, University of Salford.

Patricia Allmer is the author of numerous essays on surrealism. She is the curator of the exhibition *Angels of Anarchy: Women Surrealist Artists and Tradition* (Manchester Art Gallery, September 2009) and author of the forthcoming monograph *René Magritte: Beyond Painting* (Manchester University Press, 2009). She is a Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University.

John Sears is the author of *Reading George Szirtes* (Bloodaxe, 2008) and has also published essays on W. G. Sebald, Iain Sinclair, Robert Irwin, Maggie Gee, and other contemporary writers. He is currently working on *Stephen King's Gothic* (University of Wales Press, forthcoming). He lectures in English Literature at Manchester Metropolitan University.



Figure 10: *The Exquisite Fold* (one-off copy of Game 3: Could you stop yourself from falling in love?), Carson & Miller, 2007, 27 x 29 cm, hand-collaged work on paper. N.B.: This illustration is composed for the purposes of this article, the images are displayed differently in *The Exquisite Fold*.

Notes

1. The game of exquisite corpse is founded in the familiar parlour game of consequences, where a text or image is created through the passing of a piece of paper amongst players, which is in turn folded so that each player does not know what has gone before and does not know what will come next. Each player must create their image or compose their words without understanding how their contribution will form a part of the finished game; the resulting exquisite corpse.

2. **Significantly I think, only set down in our book retrospectively, after our games had first been played (see Figure 1).**

3. *Game 2* is in audio CD format in the book.

Bibliography

- After Babel*, Steiner, G. (1975), Oxford University Press, London, ISBN 0 192 88093 4
- The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, Tatar, M. (2004) W. W. Norton & Co Ltd., London, ISBN 0 393 05848 4
- Casting the Runes and Other Ghost Stories*, Cox, M. (1987) Oxford University Press, Oxford, ISBN 0 192 83773 7
- The Complete Fairy Tales*, MacDonald, G. (1999) Penguin Books, London, ISBN 0 14 043737 9
- The Dialogic Imagination*, Holquist, M. (1981), University of Texas Press, Austin, ISBN 0 292 71534 X
- Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Kristeva, J. (1981) Basil Blackwell, Oxford, ISBN 0 631 13045 4
- The Exquisite Fold*, Carson, J. & Miller, R. (2007) Carson & Miller, Manchester, ISBN 978 0 9557181 0 6
- From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*, Warner, M. (1995) Vintage, London, ISBN 0 09 947951 6
- Hans Christian Anderson Fairy Tales*, Wulfschlager, J. (2004) Penguin Books, London, ISBN 0 14 303952 0
- Leviathan*, Auster, P. (2001) Faber & Faber, London, ISBN: 0 571 20923 8
- Only Make Believe: Ways of Playing*, Warner, M. (2005) Compton Verney House Trust, Warwickshire, ISBN 0 9546545 6 0
- Playing and Reality*, Winnicott, D. W. (2005) Routledge, Oxford, ISBN 0 415 34546 4
- The Purloined Letter: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*, Muller, J. P. & Richardson W. J. (Eds.) (1988) Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, ISBN 0 801 83293 4
- The Uncanny*, Royle, N. (2003) Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, ISBN 0 7190 5561 X
- The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Bettelheim, B. (1991) Penguin Books, London, ISBN 0 14 013727 0
- The Exquisite Fold* (ISBN: 978 0 9557181 0 6, £7.99) is published in an edition of 100. To order, e-mail Jonathan Carson at J.Carson@salford.ac.uk or write to him at School of Art & Design, University of Salford, Centenary Building, M3 6EQ
- Artists' pages overleaf:
- Your Turn (John)* Carson & Miller, 2008
digital photograph, page 36
- Your Turn (Patricia)* Carson & Miller, 2008
digital photograph, page 37

YOUR TURN (JOHN)

GAME 2 ↘



Transcribed excerpt from Game 2

Patricia asked John: 'Do you like games?'

Patricia: (giggles) OK? Do you like games?
(rustling of paper)

John: The answer I wrote was 'No' for a variety of reasons: one because I didn't know what the question was (laughs) therefore (laughs) I just wrote no (laughs). But, err, why don't I like games? It's true. I don't like games, I like sports and I like sports that have some kind of official dimension of recognition and public involvement where as games seem to me to be intimate things played between small groups of people, it's like... it's like the privatisation of sport in a strange kind of way. And, there's a... I think, it's a sort of a degree of rivalry to the game that I find I've got other things that I want to be doing instead of playing games. A long time ago we used to play Scrabble a lot, (and) as a child we used to play chess and Monopoly and Scrabble and other games like this and I always felt while I was doing it that there was a kind of, firstly there was a family compulsion at certain times where you had to do it and anything that's compulsory I object to straight away. But secondly, there was this dimension that I you know I always wanted to be doing something different, so playing and you know playing a game (sniff) always implies being (sniff) manipulated in some way or other. If someone is playing a game with you it's not necessarily a good situation to be in, if you're playing a game with somebody else like mine it's not a desirable situation. So, there are... there are various questions about games that I find myself railing over at certain points and underlying this is a sort of tendency to move towards seriousness rather than games. That, that of course is completely contradicted by sport which is sort of just legitimised high financed games so I'm aware of the contradiction of this. But no, err my answer was the right answer in this case I don't like games and those are some of the reasons why.



GAME 1 ↘

Do you like games?

Do you want to find the truth?

Are you ready for change?

Do you know the answer?

NOTES ON GAME 1 —

PATRICIA ASKED JOHN

- DO YOU LIKE GAMES? ~ NO
- DO YOU WANT TO FIND THE TRUTH? ~ NO
- ARE YOU READY FOR CHANGE? ~ YES
- DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER? ~ NO
- * ANSWERS ON REVERSE OF FOLDED PAPER

Pierre Klossowski

Q: Do you like games?

A: No.

Rosie Miller



GAME 3

STARTS

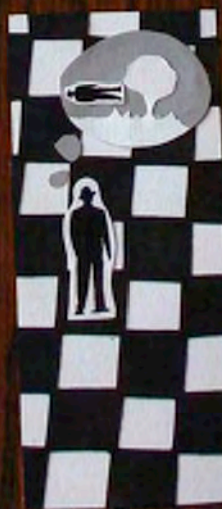
HERE



NOTES ON GAME 3 —

PATRICIA^(?) NOMINATED THIS QUESTION FOR ME TO PLAY GAME 3 WITH.

* OTHER SIDE OF POSTCARD SHOWS 'LA GLADIATRICE' (THE FEMALE GLADIATOR, 1981) BY PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI



GAME 3
ENDS
HERE



GAME 1 ↘

Is the world enough?

Will tomorrow be another day?

Are some of your best friends animals?

Has your childhood finished yet?

YOUR TURN (PATRICIA)

GAME 2 ↗



Transcribed excerpt from Game 2

John asked Patricia: 'Is the world enough?'

John: (voice inflecting) Eem, the question is: 'Is the world enough?'

(sound of paper hitting something followed by laughter from John & Patricia)

John: That's the sound of Patricia battering me. (laughter from both)

John: (spoken & quietly and trying not to laugh) You've got to answer it. Is the world enough?

Patricia: Yes. Well, (laugh) oh god! Well I can talk about my religious position if you wanna have that in terms of is the world enough and then my answer would be right as well. Yes because I do think that we don't need any other worldliness in terms of religion in order to justify our being here or in order to justify being morally or ethically good. I think (sigh) I think it is enough for us to be here (laugh). I don't know what to say to be absolutely honest, (quietly) I don't know what to...

NOTES ON GAME 1 —

JOHN ASKED PATRICIA

- IS THE WORLD ENOUGH? ~ YES
- WILL TOMORROW BE ANOTHER DAY? ~ NO
- ARE SOME OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS ANIMALS? ~ NO
- HAS YOUR CHILDHOOD FINISHED YET? ~ NO

* ANSWERS ON REVERSE OF FOLDED PAPER.

GAME 3 STARTS HERE

NOTES ON GAME 3 —

JOHN (?) NOMINATED THIS QUESTION FOR ME TO PLAY GAME 3 WITH.
* OTHER SIDE OF POSTCARD SHOWS 'THE BROKEN COLUMN' (1944) BY FRIDA KAHLO.



GAME 3 ENDS HERE

